

What is claimed is:

1. A method of receiving assistance with transportation reservations, comprising:
 - a. accessing a transportation reservation system via an Internet-enabled
5 device, said transportation reservation system being in communication with a plurality of independent travel service providers;
 - b. transmitting a travel service request to said transportation reservation system;
 - c. receiving transportation service information from said transportation
10 reservation system in response to said travel service request;
 - d. transmitting a travel request confirmation to said transportation reservation system; and
 - e. receiving transportation service in accordance with the confirmation.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting payment information to said transportation reservation system.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising transmitting identification information to said transportation reservation system, wherein said identification information
20 may identify a user as a repeat customer or a first-time customer.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein said travel service request comprises at least one of: location information regarding desired transportation, time of desired transportation, flexibility regarding the time of desired transportation, number of stops

between trip origin and trip destination, preference regarding sharing of ride and payment method.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said travel service request further
5 comprises information regarding taxi driver preference.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said information regarding taxi driver preference includes at least one of taxi driver's native language, a taxi driver's proficiency in English, type of taxi cab desired and any desired special features.

10 7. A method of providing travel reservations, comprising:
a. receiving travel information from a taxi customer;
b. validating travel information received from said taxi customer;
c. accessing a central storage device to search for available transportation
among a plurality of independent travel service providers in accordance with the received
15 travel information;
d. transmitting availability information regarding available transportation
to said taxi customer;
e. receiving confirmation from said taxi customer regarding said
available transportation; and
20 f. transmitting reservation information to a first taxi driver in
conformance with the confirmation received from said taxi customer.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising tracking said first taxi driver to ensure said first taxi driver meets said taxi customer at pre-approved arrival time.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising calculating the travel time from origination point to destination point of the travel.

5 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said travel time is calculated based on the distance between the origination point and the destination point and legally allowed speed for the travel.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein a plurality of taxis are provided with
10 devices having Global Positioning System (GPS) facilities, such that said devices transmit traffic information to a central server and allow real time navigation.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the traffic information includes traffic conditions along a route being taken by one of said plurality of taxis.

15 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the traffic information is used to assist said first taxi driver in selecting a time-efficient route from the origination point and the destination point.

20 14. The method of claim 11, further comprising receiving evaluation of service provided by the first taxi driver from said taxi customer.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising receiving payment information from said taxi customer to charge for the cost of the travel.

16. The method of claim 8, further comprising charging said taxi customer for the travel.

5 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising tracking said taxi driver upon receiving confirmation from said taxi customer to confirm that said taxi driver is on route to meet said taxi customer at the scheduled time.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising receiving customer
10 feedback regarding said travel with said first taxi driver and updating its feedback data.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising transferring payment to said first taxi driver for the travel.

15 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising generating a ranking of said first taxi driver in relation to a plurality of other taxi drivers.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising generating information on actual travel time in going from origination point to destination point of the travel,
20 satisfaction rating for the travel service and price charged by said first taxi driver for the travel.

22. A method of providing transportation services by a reservation service provider, comprising:

- a. receiving notification from a plurality of independent taxi drivers regarding availability for providing transportation;
- b. receiving a reservation request from a taxi customer;
- c. transmitting said reservation request to a first taxi driver;
- 5 d. receiving confirmation from said first taxi driver regarding providing taxi services to said taxi customer in conformance with said reservation request; and
- e. transmitting said confirmation from said first taxi driver to said taxi customer.

10 23. The method of claim 22, further comprising receiving user feedback regarding said taxi services from said taxi customer after said taxi customer has utilized said taxi services.

15 24. The method of claim 23, wherein said feedback is incorporated into a rating system for use by future taxi customers, wherein said rating system provides rating on a plurality of taxi drivers capable of providing transportation services.

20 25. The method of claim 24, wherein said plurality of taxi drivers comprises said first taxi driver.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said taxi of each of said plurality of taxi drivers is provided with a Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring device such that said reservation service provider continually and automatically receives service data from each of said plurality of taxi drivers.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising providing real-time information to said taxi customer regarding said first taxi driver, wherein said real-time information is based on said service data.

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28. The method of claim 27, wherein said real-time information includes accurate arrival time information, traffic conditions for route to be taken from origin to destination of said taxi ride, alternate routes for said taxi ride and traffic conditions for said alternate routes.

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29. The method of claim 28, wherein said taxi customer chooses said first taxi driver from said plurality of taxi drivers based on one of cost quoted by each of said plurality of taxi drivers for said taxi ride and arrival time, car type of each of said plurality of taxi drivers.

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30. A method for providing transportation reservations, comprising:

- a. accessing a computer reservation system by a user;
- b. identifying said user as an existing user or a new user;
- c. selecting of geography and time of arrival by said user;
- d. providing indication of flexibility of timing for pickup and arrival,

wherein said flexibility affects price and ability to provide transportation reservation to said user;

- e. selecting of destination, duration of trip and number of stops by said user;

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- f. indicating a preference regarding share of taxi ride by said user;
- g. selecting of driver, language, car type and special requirements by said user;
- h. selecting of payment method by said user;
- 5 i. validation of entered data for coverage, accuracy and logic by a central server;
- j. accessing internal database by said server to search for available cars and drivers and sorting data for matches to the criteria provided by said user;
- k. transmitting matched information in real time to the customer for
10 validation by the server;
- l. receiving customer affirmation of the reservation by said server;
- m. confirming the reservation charging said user by said server;
- n. notifying the customer and the driver by said server blocking the pertinent time slot from being booked by other dispatchers or third parties;
- 15 o. tracking said customer and said driver by sending confirmation Short Message Service (SMS) or electronic mail messages to said customer by said server;
- p. tracking said driver using a Global Positioning Service (GPS) device or triangulation of driver's wireless device to confirm that said driver is on route to meeting point with said customer;
- 20 q. transmitting final car and driver details using a Short Message Service (SMS) device, electronic mail or phone call to said customer by said server;
- r. arranging for a meeting place based on internally generated data or information provided by one of said customer or said driver by said server;

s. receiving customer satisfaction information from said customer using Short Message Service (SMS) device, electronic mail or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) by said server;

5 t. updating data records by said server using said customer satisfaction information;

u. transmitting payment by the server to said driver;

v. transmitting transaction information to said customer and said driver by said server; and

w. re-ranking and synchronizing data regarding the taxi ride to make
10 information available to other potential customers trying to get reservations.

31. The method of claim 30, further comprising connecting said customer and said driver, wherein said customer and said driver are unable to locate each other.

15 32. The method of claim 31, wherein said data regarding the taxi ride comprises trip duration, trip satisfaction information and taxi ride price.

33. The method of claim 7 wherein said central storage device comprises a plurality of databases selected from the group consisting of internal databases and external
20 databases.

34. The method of claim 22 wherein said confirmation comprises an affirmative confirmation or a negative confirmation, and wherein the taxi customer, driver,

dispatcher and/or company are enabled to approve of a match, disapprove of a match and make matches manually.

35. The method of claim 7 wherein said central storage device comprises a plurality of databases in which customers, companies, dispatchers, and/or drivers are enabled to make matches, and further are prevented from duplicating a reservation.

36. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
monitoring airline arrival and departure times to determine if they
differ from the scheduled arrival and departure times;
monitoring locations, travel speeds, traffic information, and occupancy
data of taxis to determine which taxis are available to meet customers; and
matching said arrival and departure times with the most efficient
choice of taxi available.

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37. The method of claim 36 further comprising:
monitoring hotel room availability to be used in matching said
customer with a hotel room.

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38. The method of claim 1 wherein said travel service request comprises bid information, the bid information comprising maximum price, flexibility information regarding pick-up time, pickup location, preferred route, and shareability, wherein during

peak hours, customers bid for cars, and wherein during off-peak hours, customers are bid for by drivers, dispatchers, or car companies.

39. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
5 receiving bid information related to said travel information, wherein said taxi customer bids on said transportation.

40. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
receiving bid information related to said availability information of
10 transportation, wherein the transportation provider bids for the customer.

41. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
comparing estimated costs between cars charging by hourly rates and
cars charging by distance traveled;
15 calculating a least expensive option for said taxi customer; and
recommending a choice based on said least expensive option.

42. A method of providing travel reservations comprising:
posting availability data and location data by a driver with a
20 transportation reservation system;
receiving a request from said transportation reservation system to
transport said customer;
determining by the driver whether to pick up said customer;

transmitting a response to said request to said transportation
reservation system;

receiving a confirmation of said response;

transporting a customer in accordance with said confirmation; and

5 receiving payment from said customer for transporting said customer.

43. The method of claim 42 further comprising:

posting further information with the transportation reservation system
regarding a driver's preferred route, fare, and time of day, such that certain requests made

10 with the transportation reservation system are automatically screened-out.

44. The method of claim 42 further comprising:

receiving a plurality of requests to transport passengers via said
transportation reservation system;

15 reviewing said plurality of requests for desired characteristics;

determining which requests to satisfy; and

transmitting responses to said plurality of requests based on which
requests will be satisfy.

20 45. A method of providing travel reservations comprising:

posting preset information regarding preferred time of travel, preferred
geography of travel, and preferred fares, with a transportation reservation system;

performing a query on databases of said transportation reservation
system based on said preset information;

receiving a response to said query from said transportation reservation system via any pre-selected mode of communication.

46. The method of claim 45 wherein said pre-selected mode of communication is selected from the group consisting of: a cellular telephone, Short Message Service (SMS), e-mail and specialized car dispatching systems.

47. A method of facilitating transit arrangements comprising:
receiving a user-defined transit service request;
10 identifying an optimal service provider for executing the transit request;
coordinating a user pick-up by said optimal service provider;
establishing a communication link with said optimal service provider;
receiving and storing service parameters related to the provided transit
15 service.

48. A system for receiving assistance with transportation reservations, comprising:
a memory having program code stored therein;
20 a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by said processor causes said processor to:

a. access a transportation reservation system via an Internet-enabled device, said transportation reservation system being in communication with a plurality of independent travel service providers;

5 b. transmit a travel service request to said transportation reservation system;

c. receive transportation service information from said transportation reservation system in response to said travel service request;

d. transmit a travel request confirmation to said transportation reservation system; and

10 e. receive transportation service in accordance with the confirmation.

49. The system of claim 47, wherein said processor is further operative to transmit payment information to said transportation reservation system.

15 50. The system of claim 49, wherein said processor is further operative to transmit identification information to said transportation reservation system, wherein said identification information may identify a user as a repeat customer or a first-time customer.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein said travel service request comprises
20 at least one of: location information regarding desired transportation, time of desired transportation, flexibility regarding the time of desired transportation, number of stops between trip origin and trip destination, preference regarding sharing of ride and payment method.

52. The system of claim 51, wherein said travel service request further comprises information regarding taxi driver preference.

53. The system of claim 52, wherein said information regarding taxi driver preference includes at least one of taxi driver's native language, a taxi driver's proficiency in English, type of taxi cab desired and any desired special features.

54. A system for providing travel reservations, comprising:
a memory having program code stored therein;
a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions
10 in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by said processor causes said processor to:

- a. receive travel information from a taxi customer;
- b. validate travel information received from said taxi customer;
- c. access a central storage device to search for available transportation
15 among a plurality of independent travel service providers in accordance with the received travel information;
- d. transmit availability information regarding available transportation to said taxi customer;
- e. receive confirmation from said taxi customer regarding said available
20 transportation; and
- f. transmit reservation information to a first taxi driver in conformance with the confirmation received from said taxi customer.

55. The system of claim 54, wherein said processor is further operative to track said first taxi driver to ensure said first taxi driver meets said taxi customer at pre-approved arrival time.

5 56. The method of claim 55, wherein said processor is further operative to calculate the travel time from origination point to destination point of the travel.

57. The method of claim 56, wherein said travel time is calculated based on the distance between the origination point and the destination point and legally allowed
10 speed for the travel.

58. The method of claim 56, wherein a plurality of taxis are provided with devices having Global Positioning System (GPS) facilities, such that said devices transmit traffic information to a central server and allow real time navigation.

15 59. The method of claim 58, wherein the traffic information includes traffic conditions along a route being taken by one of said plurality of taxis.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the traffic information is used to
20 assist said first taxi driver in selecting a time-efficient route from the origination point and the destination point.

61. The method of claim 58, further comprising receiving evaluation of service provided by the first taxi driver from said taxi customer.

62. The system of claim 61, wherein said processor is further operative to receive payment information from said taxi customer to charge for the cost of the travel.

5 63. The system of claim 55, wherein said processor is further operative to charge said taxi customer for the travel.

64. The system of claim 63, wherein said processor is further operative to track said taxi driver upon receiving confirmation from said taxi customer to confirm that
10 said taxi driver is on route to meet said taxi customer at the scheduled time.

65. The system of claim 64, wherein said processor is further operative to receive customer feedback regarding said travel with said first taxi driver and updating its feedback data.

15 66. The system of claim 65, wherein said processor is further operative to transfer payment to said first taxi driver for the travel.

67. The system of claim 66, wherein said processor is further operative to
20 generate a ranking of said first taxi driver in relation to a plurality of other taxi drivers.

68. The system of claim 66, wherein said processor is further operative to generate information on actual travel time in going from origination point to destination point

of the travel, satisfaction rating for the travel service and price charged by said first taxi driver for the travel.

69. A system for providing transportation services by a reservation service provider, comprising:
- a memory having program code stored therein;
 - a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by said processor causes said processor to:
 - a. receive notification from a plurality of independent taxi drivers regarding availability for providing transportation;
 - b. receive a reservation request from a taxi customer;
 - c. transmit said reservation request to a first taxi driver;
 - d. receive confirmation from said first taxi driver regarding providing taxi services to said taxi customer in conformance with said reservation request; and
 - e. transmit said confirmation from said first taxi driver to said taxi customer.

70. The system of claim 69, wherein said processor is further operative to receiving user feedback regarding said taxi services from said taxi customer after said taxi customer has utilized said taxi services.

71. The system of claim 70, wherein said feedback is incorporated into a rating system for use by future taxi customers, wherein said rating system provides rating on a plurality of taxi drivers capable of providing transportation services.

5 72. The system of claim 70, wherein said plurality of taxi drivers comprises said first taxi driver.

73. The system of claim 72, wherein said taxi of each of said plurality of taxi drivers is provided with a Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring device such that
10 said reservation service provider continually and automatically receives service data from each of said plurality of taxi drivers.

74. The system of claim 73, wherein said processor is further operative to provide real-time information to said taxi customer regarding said first taxi driver, wherein
15 said real-time information is based on said service data.

75. The system of claim 74, wherein said real-time information includes accurate arrival time information, traffic conditions for route to be taken from origin to destination of said taxi ride, alternate routes for said taxi ride and traffic conditions for said
20 alternate routes.

76. The system of claim 75, wherein said taxi customer chooses said first taxi driver from said plurality of taxi drivers based on one of cost quoted by each of said

plurality of taxi drivers for said taxi ride and arrival time, car type of each of said plurality of taxi drivers.

77. A system for providing transportation reservations, comprising:

5 a memory having program code stored therein;
a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by said processor causes said processor to:

- 10 a. access a computer reservation system by a user;
b. identify said user as an existing user or a new user;
c. select of geography and time of arrival by said user;
d. provide indication of flexibility of timing for pickup and arrival,
wherein said flexibility affects price and ability to provide transportation reservation to said user;
15 e. select of destination, duration of trip and number of stops by said user;
f. indicate a preference regarding share of taxi ride by said user;
g. select of driver, language, car type and special requirements by said user;
user;
h. select of payment method by said user;
20 i. validate entered data for coverage, accuracy and logic by a central server;
j. access internal database by said server to search for available cars and drivers and sorting data for matches to the criteria provided by said user;

- k. transmit matched information in real time to the customer for validation by the server;
- l. receive customer affirmation of the reservation by said server;
- m. confirm the reservation charging said user by said server;
- 5 n. notify the customer and the driver by said server blocking the pertinent time slot from being booked by other dispatchers or third parties;
- o. track said customer and said driver by sending confirmation Short Message Service (SMS) or electronic mail messages to said customer by said server;
- p. track said driver using a Global Positioning Service (GPS) device or
10 triangulation of driver's wireless device to confirm that said driver is on route to meeting point with said customer;
- q. transmit final car and driver details using a Short Message Service (SMS) device, electronic mail or phone call to said customer by said server;
- r. arrange for a meeting place based on internally generated data or
15 information provided by one of said customer or said driver by said server;
- s. receive customer satisfaction information from said customer using Short Message Service (SMS) device, electronic mail or Interactive Voice Response (IVR) by said server;
- t. update data records by said server using said customer satisfaction
20 information;
- u. transmit payment by the server to said driver;
- v. transmit transaction information to said customer and said driver by said server; and

w. re-rank and synchronize data regarding the taxi ride to make information available to other potential customers trying to get reservations.

5 78. The system of claim 77, wherein said processor is further operative to connect said customer and said driver, wherein said customer and said driver are unable to locate each other.

10 79. The system of claim 78, wherein said data regarding the taxi ride comprises trip duration, trip satisfaction information and taxi ride price.

80. The system of claim 54 wherein said central storage device comprises a plurality of databases selected from the group consisting of internal databases and external databases.

15 81. The system of claim 69 wherein said confirmation comprises an affirmative confirmation or a negative confirmation, and wherein the taxi customer, driver, dispatcher and/or company are enabled to approve of a match, disapprove of a match and make matches manually.

20 82. The system of claim 54, wherein said central storage device comprises a plurality of databases in which customers, companies, dispatchers, and/or drivers are enabled to make matches, and further are prevented from duplicating a reservation.

83. The system of claim 48, wherein said processor is further operative to

monitor airline arrival and departure times to determine if they differ from the scheduled arrival and departure times;

monitor locations, travel speeds, traffic information, and occupancy data of taxis to determine which taxis are available to meet customers; and match said arrival and departure times with the most efficient choice of taxi available.

84. The system of claim 83, wherein said processor is further operative to: monitor hotel room availability to be used in matching said customer with a hotel room.

85. The system of claim 48, wherein said travel service request comprises bid information, the bid information comprising maximum price, flexibility information regarding pick-up time, pickup location, preferred route, and shareability, wherein during peak hours, customers bid for cars, and wherein during off-peak hours, customers are bid for by drivers, dispatchers, or car companies.

86. The system of claim 54, wherein said processor is further operative to: receive bid information related to said travel information, wherein said taxi customer bids on said transportation.

87. The system of claim 54, wherein said processor is further operative to: receive bid information related to said availability information of transportation, wherein the transportation provider bids for the customer.

88. The system of claim 54, wherein said processor is further operative to:

compare estimated costs between cars charging by hourly rates and cars charging by distance traveled;

calculate a least expensive option for said taxi customer; and

recommend a choice based on said least expensive option.

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89. A system for providing travel reservations comprising:

a memory having program code stored therein;

a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by

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said processor causes said processor to:

post availability data and location data by a driver with a transportation reservation system;

receive a request from said transportation reservation system to transport said customer;

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determine by the driver whether to pick up said customer;

transmit a response to said request to said transportation reservation system;

receive a confirmation of said response;

transport a customer in accordance with said confirmation; and

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receive payment from said customer for transporting said customer.

90. The system of claim 89, wherein said processor is further operative to:

post further information with the transportation reservation system regarding a driver's preferred route, fare, and time of day, such that certain requests made with the transportation reservation system are automatically screened-out.

5 91. The system of claim 89, wherein said processor is further operative to:
receive a plurality of requests to transport passengers via said
transportation reservation system;
review said plurality of requests for desired characteristics;
determine which requests to satisfy; and
transmit responses to said plurality of requests based on which requests
10 will be satisfy.

 92. A system for providing travel reservations comprising:
a memory having program code stored therein;
a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions
in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by
15 said processor causes said processor to:
post preset information regarding preferred time of travel, preferred
geography of travel, and preferred fares, with a transportation reservation system;
perform a query on databases of said transportation reservation system
based on said preset information;
20 receive a response to said query from said transportation reservation
system via any pre-selected mode of communication.

93. The system of claim 92, wherein said pre-selected mode of communication is selected from the group consisting of: a cellular telephone, Short Message Service (SMS), e-mail and specialized car dispatching systems.

5 94. A system for facilitating transit arrangements comprising:
a memory having program code stored therein; and
a processor operatively connected to said memory for carrying out instructions
in accordance with said stored program code, wherein said program code, when executed by
said processor causes said processor to:
10 receive a user-defined transit service request;
identify an optimal service provider for executing the transit request;
coordinate a user pick-up by said optimal service provider;
establish a communication link with said optimal service provider;
receive and store service parameters related to the provided transit
15 service.